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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ETRD](#) [USTR](#) [WTO](#) [ECON](#) [EAGR](#) [KU](#)
SUBJECT: NOTIFICATION OF GCC CUSTOMS UNION TO THE WTO;
KUWAIT'S RESPONSE

REF: STATE 19377

¶1. (SBU) EconCouns and LES Econspecialist met with Abdulaziz Al-Khalidi, Assistant Under Secretary for Foreign Trade Affairs to discuss the GCC's notification of its customs union to the World Trade Organization. Khalidi was accompanied by Khaled Al-Azemi, Controller for Foreign Relations and called in Abdullatif Al-Hendal, Controller for WTO Affairs to discuss the demarche in more detail. Hendal initially explained that the enabling clause was chosen because it appeared to be more appropriate to the needs of developing countries. Both he and Khalidi stressed that they were not interested in harming U.S. interests and expressed their desire to solve the problem amicably. Hendal promised to raise the issues in his meetings with his GCC counterparts and Khalidi instructed him to have Kuwait's WTO representative contact USTR attach in Geneva to discuss the matter further.

¶2. (SBU) Hendal confided that the reason the GCC switched its notification to the enabling clause was out of a concern that the data requirements under Article XXIV of the GATT were too complicated and detailed for several of the GCC members to fulfill. (Note: In an Arabic sidebar with Khalidi, he mentioned Harmonized Schedule data as an area of concern. End Note.)

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